

DILEXIT NOS (HE LOVED US)

Reflecting with Pope Francis in Chapter 2



*Pope Francis' ministry was grounded in a deep experience of the loving ministry of Christ, who was close to those on the margins. This reflection is inspired by Pope Francis' reflections in chapter 2 of *Dilexit Nos (He Loved Us)*.*

As we pray with Chapter 2 of Pope Francis' *Dilexit Nos*, we begin by entering into the quiet. In our prayerful stillness, we are reminded of a powerful and simple truth: he loves us.

In the first reflection in this series, we began our time of prayer by quieting the mind and relaxing the body, noticing any tension or stress and then letting it go. Do so again. Next, focus on breathing, slowly and deeply. When you release your breath, release also any concerns, worries, or preoccupations that might prevent you from entering fully into this time of prayer. Seek to create an empty

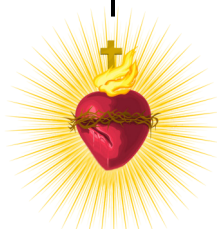
and quiet space, where there is room for the Lord.

In Chapter 2 of *Dilexit Nos*, we are reminded that we come to know how Christ sees us through his actions (no. 34). In the Gospels, we see that we are not strangers to him; he comes “close to us”; he “watches over and cherishes us” (no. 35).

He seeks out the Samaritan woman at the well (Jn 4:5-7). He goes out to meet the fearful Nicodemus (Jn. 3:1-2). He allows his feet to be washed by her whom Luke describes as a sinful woman (Lk. 7:36-50). He quietly asks the blind man on the roadside, “What do you want me to do for you?” (Mk. 10:51). He places himself in proximity to those who suffer, in order to heal (Mt. 8:3; 8:15; 9:29).

“In his compassion,” Pope Francis writes, “God does not love us with words, he comes forth to meet us and, by his closeness, he shows us the depth of his tender love” (no. 36). He loves us!

We are invited to ponder and to rest in the “gaze” of Jesus, the one who sees us. He sees the crowds and has compassion (Mt. 9:36). He sees Philip under the fig



tree and calls him (Jn. 1:48). He sees the poor widow in her poverty and generosity (Lk. 21:2). And he invites us to abide in his gaze.

Abide in his gaze now. Rest in the presence of the one who loves us. In these quiet minutes, take the time that you need to simply rest in his gaze.

But it is not only about resting. Christ's gaze not only heals us; it also transforms. In resting in his gaze, your own vision is able to transform. Your own sight can widen beyond your own needs and concerns, for the gaze of Christ is on all whom he loves.

Ponder these questions:

How can I better see with the eyes of Christ?

***Whom* am I called to see with his loving and compassionate eyes?**

How can his gaze become my own?

In the Gospels, Jesus experiences strong emotions. He weeps for Jerusalem (Lk. 19:41). He weeps at the tomb of Lazarus (Jn. 11:35). He weeps, in anguish, at "his impending violent death at the hands of those whom he had loved so greatly" (no. 45, on Mk. 14:33). For whom might he

weep today? For whom might our own hearts weep as we seek to imitate his love?

As you close this time of prayer, you may wish to pray:

Lord, I thank you for the gift of your gaze, for me, and for all.

Help me to see with your divine eyes, which gaze with love where human eyes fail to perceive the beauty and dignity of all whom you love. Amen.



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